

WASHINGTON – Today, Reps. Earl Blumenauer, Louise Slaughter and other House Democrats released a [letter to the Judiciary Committee](#) [PDF] calling for hearings on the pattern of potential ethical lapses by Justice Clarence Thomas. Reports of Thomas's actions have created serious concerns regarding conflicts of interest that undermine appellants' rights of due process and also raise substantive questions about his impartiality as a member of the Supreme Court heading into a new term. The letter urges that the Committee hold hearings regarding the nature of these questions, their factual basis, and their potential to undermine the public's trust in the Supreme Court.

"The Supreme Court's greatest assets are its integrity and the public trust," **said Blumenauer**. "Yet for months now, concerns have been building about the unwillingness or the inability of the Supreme Court to address allegations of potential ethics violations by Justice Clarence Thomas. It is particularly troubling that he suddenly stopped disclosing information concerning the income and employment status of his wife as required by law, and that he failed to report gifts from wealthy supporters and inappropriately solicited donations for favored organizations. Because the Court continues to operate without a binding code of ethics or a transparent recusal process, it is time for Congress to exercise its Constitutional role and become involved in this process."

"The issue of non-disclosure is about whether or not Justice Thomas broke the law," **said Slaughter**.

"If he willfully misrepresented his wife's employment for 13 years, that is a violation of the Ethics in Government Act of 1978. All appropriate governmental bodies, including the House Judiciary Committee, should be investigating ethical issues such as this, and exploring ways to improve the accountability of the Supreme Court while maintaining its independence as the third and equal branch of government."

The letter is signed by Reps. Earl Blumenauer, Louise Slaughter, Peter Welch, Chris Murphy, Mike Thompson, John Larson, Xavier Becerra, John Lewis, Bill Pascrell and Joseph Crowley. It remains open for signatures.